

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Lucinda

#### Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Process Bottleneck Elimination Yields Lean Opportunities

##### Client Profile:

Lucinda, located in Portland, Maine, produces lapel pins which are used strictly for fundraising by non-profit organizations. The pins use a metal backer/pin plate which is glued to a built up design made of layers of cardboard and coated with a clear polymer. Bubbles in this coating were a major bottleneck for the company. Lucinda currently has 5 employees.

##### Situation:

Lucinda recognized that production could be improved and called on John Karp at the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP), a NIST MEP a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

##### Solution:

Maine MEP's John Karp suggested a change in the coating process after a plant tour quickly revealed the magnitude of the issue. Further, he suggested utilizing funding from the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) for the pilot production equipment. After an introduction to MTI, Lucinda won the needed funding and tested the new coating technology. The results were outstanding, eliminating the vast majority of rework at the company. This process change smoothed out the largest bottleneck at the company, and business increased dramatically. As the sales increased, other smaller bottlenecks emerged and Maine MEP once again found grant funding from the U.S. Department of Labor to cover the costs of company wide Timewise 101 Lean training, value stream mapping, and Kaisan events

##### Results:

- \* Increased production.
- \* Increased employment from 15 people to 70 people during peak season.
- \* Increased sales by 14 percent.

##### Testimonial:

"Clearing the bottleneck allowed Designs by Lucinda to reduce finishing time from 4-1/2 days to 1-1/2 days. These savings were then invested into increasing our sales team, which has yielded a 14 percent increase in sales for 2004.

Mike Reynolds, General Manager